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RUEHSI/AMEMBASSY TBILISI PRIORITY 2979
RUEHYE/AMEMBASSY YEREVAN PRIORITY 1191
RUEAWJA/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEHC/DEPT OF LABOR WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEAHLC/HOMELAND SECURITY CENTER WASHDC PRIORITY

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SUBJECT: TURKEY: SIXTH ANNUAL TIP REPORT: OVERVIEW AND
PREVENTION

REF: SECSTATE 03836

¶1. (U) Sensitive but unclassified. Please protect
accordingly.

¶2. (U) Post's responses are keyed to questions in Reftel A.
This is part 1 of 3 (septel). Embassy point of contact is Linda Fenton, telephone number 90-312-455-5555 X 2513, fax number 90-312-468-4775. Fenton (FS-04) spent approximately 100 hours in preparation of this TIP report. Political Counselor Janice G. Weiner (rank: FS-01) spent approximately one hour in preparation of this report.

Overview

¶1A. (SBU) Turkey remains a destination and transit country for women and children trafficked for the purposes of sexual exploitation and some forced labor. Though no territory within the country is outside government control, porous borders and a liberal visa regime provide a comfortable environment for traffickers smuggling victims to, within, and through Turkey.

There are no reliable estimates of the number of internally or internationally trafficked victims. The Istanbul Shelter NGO, Human Resources Development Foundation (HRDF), the Ankara Shelter NGO, Foundation for Women's Solidarity (FWS), and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) combined to repatriate 220 foreign victims in 2005, up from 62 in 2004. IOM reports that 23 of the victims the Turkish National Police identified refused assistance from IOM. According to HRDF, one victim is still in country on a humanitarian visa; one got married and stayed in Turkey; and one, after obtaining refugee status from UNHCR, was

repatriated to a third country.

The Ministry of Interior reports 256 identified victims in 2005 and 28 from January through mid-February 2006. The source countries were distributed as follows: Ukraine (90), Moldova (73), Russia (29), Kyrgyzstan (26), Romania (11), Uzbekistan (10), Kazakhstan (9), Belarus (6), Georgia (7), Turkmenistan (6), Azerbaijan (14), Bulgaria (1), Armenia (1), Uganda (1).

According to IOM statistics, the most vulnerable group of persons to be trafficked are women between the ages of 18 and 24.

¶B. (SBU) The GoT continues to take the issue of trafficking in persons seriously and has taken significant measures within the rating period to prevent and combat trafficking.

The GoT signed protocols for cross-border and anti-trafficking cooperation in the rating period with Georgia, Ukraine and Moldova, and is expected to sign a similar protocol with Kyrgyzstan in March 2006.

The GoT continued to strengthen its efforts to actively pursue a focused public awareness campaign reaching out to victims, law enforcement, and customers. A toll-free 24-hour hotline for victims of trafficking began operation in May 2005. Since then, the hotline has handled nearly 1,000 trafficking-related calls. Seventy-four percent of the callers to the hotline are clients concerned that the women they have been with are actually victims of trafficking. The interest of these clients was piqued by the two public awareness campaigns that IOM implemented and the GoT endorsed

and supported: one advertising the hotline, and the other appealing to the strong sense of family in Turkey by revealing that one-third of the women trafficked to Turkey are mothers. The Ankara municipality completely refurbished and furnished a shelter, which opened in October 2005. This FWS-run shelter is the second such shelter in Turkey.

Most victims enter Turkey willingly and some arrive with the knowledge that they will work illegally in the sex industry. Most, however, initially expected to work as models, waitresses, dancers, domestic servants, or in other regular employment. Once in Turkey, traffickers typically confiscate the victims' personal documents and passports and force victims into confinement where they are raped, beaten into submission, and intimidated by threats of retaliation against the victims' family members.

¶C. (SBU) There are credible reports that some law enforcement officials received bribes either to smuggle aliens or turn a blind eye to illegal prostitution. Salaries for police officers are relatively low. The GoT does not lack the resources to aid victims. The GoT in October 2005 granted HRDF 150,000 YTL (approximately USD 114,000) to offset some of the cost of running the Istanbul shelter. The Ministry of Health provides free medical and psychiatric services to victims of trafficking.

¶D. (SBU) The MFA, which chairs the National Taskforce, updates its counter-trafficking website periodically, at least every six months after a taskforce meeting. The GoT, however, has had limited success in implementing a government-wide system for reliably monitoring and assessing its anti-trafficking efforts, particularly regarding arrests, prosecutions, convictions, and sentencing of traffickers.

Prevention

¶A. (U) The Government of Turkey acknowledges that trafficking is a problem in this country.

¶B. (U) Government agencies involved in anti-trafficking efforts include the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Health,

Interior (which includes the Turkish National Police and the Jandarma (paramilitary rural police)), Justice, and Labor; the Directorate General for Social Services and Child Protection; and the Directorate General on the Status and Problems of Women. The MFA serves as national coordinator for the government's task force on human trafficking.

I.C. (U) Turk Telecom and the GoT began operation in May 2005 of a new toll-free hotline number, 157, for victims of trafficking. Operators who speak Russian, Romanian, English and Turkish man the hotline 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Interestingly, 74 percent of the calls that have come into the hotline are from friends and clients of trafficked women.

In conjunction with the hotline, the IOM launched an international trafficking campaign in June 2005 which promoted prevention of TIP across the Black Sea region. In addition to the USD 600,000 funding from the USG, the GoT contributed USD 100,000.

In Turkey, authorities distributed small passport inserts to travelers entering the country at key border crossings. Turkish consulates also handed out the inserts to visa applicants in source countries. The passport inserts

publicized the hotline and included warning signs of trafficking. Billboards in major sea ports and regional airports in Turkey, Moldova and Ukraine also advertised the hotline. Television commercials publicizing the number ran on channels in all three countries. The campaign also included stepped up training for law enforcement, and medical, psychological and direct assistance to trafficked individuals.

Using the balance of the USD 700,000, the IOM launched a second trafficking awareness campaign entitled "Have You Seen My Mother?" in February 2006. At the heart of the campaign is a 30-second commercial, filmed in Moldova with four Moldovan children, asking where their mothers are because the children miss them. It appeals to the Turkish strong sense of family and especially to potential clients. Poster space was donated by the Istanbul, Ankara, Trabzon, Antalya, and Izmir municipalities, as well as by airport authorities in Istanbul, Trabzon and Antalya.

The Turkish Jandarma printed an extra 150,000 copies of their TIP brochures entitled, "The Struggle Against Human Trafficking," which they distributed to police precincts and citizens nationwide. Fifty thousand were published in English, 50,000 in Russian and the balance in Turkish. In 2004, the Jandarma had printed and distributed 9,000 brochures. The brochures outline what trafficking is, how to recognize a trafficked person, and what to do if someone is trafficked. They are targeted to potential victims, as well as potential clients and the general public.

I.D. (U) While there are no specific programs to prevent trafficking in Turkey, the GoT does support programming to keep children in school. UNICEF and the Ministry of Education teamed up for the "Haydi Kizlar Okula" (Let's go to school, girls) campaign across the country. The goal of the campaign was to close the gender-gap in primary school enrollment.

The "Kardelenler" (snowdrop flower) scholarship campaign received heavy support from PM Erdogan's wife, Emine. Turkcell and the Association to Support Contemporary Life provided 5,000 scholarships to girls in 41 provinces last year to allow them to attend school.

With a USD 6 million grant from the U.S. Department of Labor, in September 2005 the Turkish Ministries of Labor and Education, the International Labor Organization and IMPAQ International launched a project combating exploitative child labor through education in Turkey. Objectives of the project include raising awareness of the importance of education for all children and improving and mobilizing a wide array of

actors to improve and expand educational infrastructures; strengthening formal and transitional education systems that encourage working children and those at risk of working to attend school; strengthen national institutions and policies on education and child labor; and ensuring the long-term sustainability of these efforts.

The GoT played host to a conference in February 2006 organized within the framework of the Democracy Assistance Dialogue (DAD) to develop an action platform to increase the role of women in public life in the region. This was a follow-on to a June 2005 DAD symposium also held in Turkey.

I.F. (SBU) According to IOM Turkey Chief of Mission Lindstrom, relations between IOM and government officials are limited by design; it is not the same relationship as NGOs have with source country officials. She lamented, as did

HRDF and FWS members, that there was not more financial support. But, she added, both the Ankara and Istanbul municipalities have provided shelters and even paid many of the utilities. In addition, municipalities around the country have posted advertisements for the "Have You Seen My Mother?" public awareness campaign.

HRDF and FWS are pleased with the cooperation of law enforcement contacts. Gulsen Ak of FWS was also impressed with the medical care victims receive, though she wished doctors would send a larger batch of medicine back with victims, instead of making them return frequently to the health care facility. She is confident that the Ministry of Health will remedy the situation.

I.G. (SBU) According to the MFA's Ozlem Kural, the GoT does not monitor immigration and emigration patterns for evidence of trafficking. Kural indicated, however, that a border management action plan will be written in 2006. Passport inserts advertising the 157 hotline continue to be distributed at points of entry, including the Istanbul, Trabzon and Antalya airports and the Istanbul and Trabzon seaports.

I.H. (U) Ambassador Derya Kanbay, Director General for Consular Affairs at the Turkish MFA, spearheads the GoT's anti-trafficking initiatives, and is the National Coordinator for the GoT's Counter Trafficking Task Force. Akif Ayhan is Taskforce Deputy Director. The Taskforce, chaired by the MFA since its establishment in 2002, is composed of representatives from the Ministries of Health, Interior, Justice, and Labor, plus the Directorate General for Social Services and Child Protection, and the Directorate General on the Status and Problems of Women, State Planning Organization, Office of the Prime Minister-Human Rights Presidency, IOM, HRDF, FWS, as well as Ankara and Metropolitan Municipalities.

The Government also participates in anti-trafficking initiatives through the OSCE, the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (SECI), the Council on Europe, NATO,

the International Center for Migration Policy Development, Interpol, Europol, the Berne Initiative, the Budapest Process, the Global Commission on International Migration and Core Group of States, the Issyk-Kul Dialogue, the European Committee on Migration, CIREFI, MEDA, and the Stability Pact Task Force on Trafficking in Human Beings. During the past year, the Government expanded bilateral and multilateral protocols with neighboring countries and regional groups to encompass anti-trafficking law enforcement agreements, including cooperation protocols with Georgia in March 2005 and Ukraine in June 2005, Moldova in February 2006, as well as signing a Readmission Agreement with Ukraine in June 2005.

A similar protocol will be signed with Kyrgyzstan in March 2006.

The Prime Ministry Public Employees Ethics Board, established in 2004, monitors all public employees, with the exception of the President, parliamentarians, ministers, armed forces

members, the judiciary and university employees.

IJ. (U) The Taskforce recommended and the government adopted a National Action Plan for TIP in March 2003. All members (including NGOs) of the Taskforce were involved in developing the action plan. The 2003 action plan has been disseminated. A new action plan will be formulated with the conclusion of a Twinning Project with Germany and Austria on "Strengthening Institutions in the Fight Against Trafficking in Human Beings."

WILSON